

Hegira Years in Greek, Greek-Coptic and Greek-Arabic Papyri

It is well known that the Arabs use a year count based upon a lunar year. The point of departure for this count is the day on which, according to the tradition, Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina, i.e. on 16.VII.622 (cf. V. GRUMEL, *La Chronologie*, 225, who points out that the traditional date is wrong, as the flight took place in fact 68 days later than the tradition would have it).

When Egypt was conquered by the Arabs in A.D. 641, they introduced their own year count into this country while abolishing the traditional counting of regnal years of the emperor in Byzantium, the use of (post-) consular years of this same ruler, and — in the Oxyrynchite Nome only— the use of a local era. The system of counting fiscal years in cycles of 15 indiction years (the years within each cycle being numbered 1-15, the cycles themselves being unnumbered) which had been introduced into Egypt ca. A.D. 314 (cf. R. S. BAGNALL-K. A. WORP, *Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (=CSBE), 1-8), however, was not abolished by the Arabs (see the discussion by H. Cadell of the chronology of the correspondence of Kurrah b. Sharik in «Rech. Pap». 4 [1967] 138ff.). Furthermore, the local population of Egypt started to use the era of Diocletian (later called the era of the Martyrs; year 1 = A.D. 284/5) on a much wider scale than had been the practice before. Before 641 this era had been used primarily for dating horoscopes and on gravestones for dating deaths or burials; after 641 one finds this era used for dating all kinds of contracts and receipts written on papyrus, especially in the Arsinoite and Heracleopolite Nomes (for the details see CSBE, Chapt. VII; «Gr. Rom. Byz. St.» 20 [1979] 285-86).

Although a considerable number of Greek papyri dating from the period after 641 have been published during the past decades, the

number documents bearing an absolute date is relatively small. The dating of the greater portion of our documentation rests on considerations of palaeography and prosopography, and there is no need to stress once again that there are always elements of uncertainty and doubt in these procedures (cf., e.g. «ZPE» 49 [1982] 83-96). Most of our absolutely dated documentation, moreover, is dated with the help of a Diocletian era year; the use of a Hegira year (also called "Saracene era year") seems to have been much less popular as a means of dating. Up until now, no comprehensive list of Hegira years found in Greek papyri published to date is available and it has therefore not been possible to make further investigations into the use of this year count among the Greek-speaking inhabitants of Arabic Egypt.

It seems worthwhile, therefore, to present the result of an attempt to assemble as fully as possible those documents showing a Hegira year in Greek, Greek/Coptic and Greek/Arabic documentary papyri in tabular form and try to formulate some conclusions. Into this table I have included a number of papyri which are of Non-Egyptian provenance, but which show characteristics related to those found in similar documents from Egypt itself. Unfortunately, editors of Greek texts have not always taken care to index Hegira years not attached to a formula like ἔτους κατ' Ἀραβίας, and it may well be that some relevant documents escaped my notice. The same may have happened as regards Coptic papyri (moreover, I cannot claim to have seen all editions of Coptic documents). Documents written in Arabic only have been ignored completely. For the use of Hegira years in Arabic papyri cf. *MPER* I (1887) 50, 124 (the lists of years attested in Arabic papyri need complete revision, of course); cf. also A. GROHMANN, *Arabische Chronologie/Arabische Papyruskunde*, Leiden 1966, 14ff. 42f.

N.B.: In the following table an * before a reference to a publication indicates that there is a conflict between the Hegira date and other dating criteria found in such texts.

No. Edition	Hegira year, month, day	Julian date	Greek month, day, indiction, year	Julian date	Notes
1 SB VI 9675	22, Djumada I	28.3- 26.4.643	Pharmouthi 30, ind. 1	25.4.643	Hegira year only in Arabic part. The German editor wrongly translated in SB "im Monat Gumdada, am ersten"; the ed. princ. rightly translated "Goumâdâ premier".
2 P.Ness. 60	54, Dhu'l-Qa'da	7.10- 5-11.674	November, ind. 3, year [54]	11.674	
3 *P.Ness. 61	55, Rajab	1.6- 1.7.675	Augustus, ind. 3, year 55	8.675	
4 *P.Ness. 62, 63	55, Shawal	29.8- 27.9.675	October, ind. 4, year 55	10.675	
5 P.Ness. 64	56, Rabi'	23.1- 21.2.676	February, ind. [4], year 56	2.676	Or date Hegira text to Rabi' II, i.e., 22.2-21.3.676? See editor's introduction.
6 P.Ness. 65	5-, Rabi'	23.1- 21.2.—	—, ind. 4, year [56]	1.9.675- 31.8.676	See preceding note and editor's introduction.
7 P.Ness. 66	57, Rabi' I	12.1- 10.2.677	February, ind. 5, year 57	2.677	
8 PERF 573	57, Djumada II, 7	17.4.677	Pharmouthi 22, ind. 5	17.4.677	Full text still unpublished; cf. CPR VIII, p. 201; day really given also in the Arabic part of the doc. ? Always omitted elsewhere.
9 P.Ness. 56	67	28.6.686- 17.7.687	Peritios 3, ind. 15, Bostra era year 581	18.1.687	Hegira year only in the Arabic part where month is omitted. For the conversion of the Greek dating elements cf. V. Grumel, <i>La Chronologie</i> , 173. c.

No.	Edition	Hegira year, month, day	Julian date	Greek month, day, indiction, year	Julian date	Notes
10	*ZPE 50 (1983) 141f.	75, [—]	2.5.694- 20.4.695	Mesore 22, ind. 7	15.8.693	Hegira year only in the Arabic part where month is lost. For the conflict between Hegira year date and indictional date cf. editors' introd.
11	APEL IV 286 = SPP VIII 1345	87, Dhu'l- Qa'da	14.10- 12.11.706	Phaophi, ind. 5	28.9- 27.10.706	
12	PAF X (= SB I 5641 = PSR 9 + P.Lond.IV 1407)	90, Ramadan	14.7- 12.8.709	Mesore 1, ind. 8	25.7.709	See the remarks in «Rech. Pap.» 4 (1967) 153 n. 2.
11	PAF IX (= SB I 5640 = PSR 8 + P.Lond.IV 1408)	90, Sawwal	13.8- 10.9.709	Thoth 6, ind. 8	3.9.709	Payment for the cursus of year 91 (9.11.709-28.10.710), ind. 9 (1.5.710-30.4.711).
14	PAF VIII (= SB I 5639 = PSR 7 + 20g + P.Lond. IV 1410)	90, Dul Higga	11.10- 8.11.709	Hathyr 6, ind. 8	2.11.709	Payment for the cursus of year 91; cf. preceding text.

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15	*SB I 5638, 91, Safar 5644-5655; W.Chrest. 256; APEL III 160, 161; PERF 593		9.12.709- 6.1.710	Thoth, ind. 8 (PERF 593 adds year 88 in the Greek dating)	29.8- 27.9.709	See the remarks in «Rech. Pap.» 4 (1967) 153 n. 4; 155 n. 8; For the publication of PERF 593 see CPR VIII, p. 201. Texts concern taxes for (solar) Hegira year 88 (7.709-7.710), ind. 6 (lunar count).
16	«Zeitschr. f. [95], [—] Assyriologie» 22 (1908) 150, cf. «Arch.f.Pap.» 5 (1913) 189		26.9.713- 15.9.714	Hathyr 26, ind. 12	22.11.713	
17	P.Lond. IV 95, ind. 13 1434.135-136			Phaophi 19, ind. 14	17.10.715	Payment for people who set out during year 95 (9.713-9.714), ind. 13 (1.5.714-30.4.715).
18	P.Lond. IV 96, ind. 14 1434.10, 18, 23, 36, 136, 151, 190; 1435.68, 96, 98			Various dates between Phame- noth 11, ind. 13 and Tybi 2, ind. 14	7.3- 29.12.715	See P.Lond. IV 1434.10 n.; various entries list payments made during/for Hegira year 96 (16.9. 714-4.9.715), ind. 14 (1.5.715-30.4.716).
19	P.Lond. IV 97, ind. 14 1435.76			Hathyr 20, ind. 14	17.11.715	Cf. P.Lond. IV 1434.10 n.; payment for Hegira year 97 (5.9.715-24.8.716), ind. 14 (1.5.715-30.4.716).

No.	Edition	Hegira year, month, day	Julian date	Greek month, day, indiction, year	Julian date	Notes
20	P.Lond. IV 1434.176, 225; 1435.21, 108; P.Cair. Masp. III 67359 ii ^r .2	97, ind. 15		entries dated to Hathyr 20, Mesore 20 and Tybi 7, ind. 14	16.11.716, 13.8.716 and 2.1.717	Various entries referring to Hegira year 97 (5.9.715-24.8.716), ind. 15 (1.5.716-30.4.717). P.Cair. Masp. III 67357 ii ^r .2 lacks an independent dating, but refers to Hegira year 97, ind. 15 in the heading of the document.
21	P.Lond. IV 1436.122	[98], ind. 1		lost		Hegira year 98 = 25.8.716-13.8.717, ind. 1 = 1.5.717-30.4.718.
22	P.Lond. IV 1436.30	9[9], ind. 2		lost		Hegira year 99 = 14.8.717-2.8.718, ind. 2 = 1.5.718-30.4.719.
23	P.Lond. IV 1437.10, 15	100, ind. 2		After (?) Choiak 21, ind. 2	17.12.718 of later	Hegira year 100 = 3.8.718-23.7.719, ind. 2 = 1.5.718-30.4.719.
24	P.Grenf. II 105, 106	101, Safar	23.8- 20.9.719	Mesore epag. 2, ind. 3	25.8.719	See re-edition in «TAPA» 69 (1938) 289. Tax receipts probably referring to Hegira year 98 (solar count); see note to # 15 above.
25	SPP VIII 1195	104, ind. 7		lost		See the remarks in «BSAC» 26 (1984) 100, 105; Hegira year 104, lunar count = 21.6.722-9.6.723, ind. 7 = 1.5.723-30.4.724. Reference is made to tax-payment for this year.
26	Bala'izah II 130 app.	105, 106, ind. 7, 8	10.6.723- 18.5.725	Tybi, ind. 7	28-31.12. 723/1-26. 1.724	Year 105 H = 10.6.723-28.5.724; year 106 H. = 29.5.724-18.5.725.; ind. 7 = 1.5.723-30.4.724; ind. 8 = 1.5.724-30.4.725. Reference is made to tax-payments for these years.
27	Bala'izah II 287	106	29.5.724- 18.5.725	Phamenoth or Pharmouthi ind. 8	21.3. or 20.4.725	

No.	Edition	Hegira year, month, day	Julian date	Greek month, day, indiction, year	Julian date	Notes
28	*SB I 5609 = KRU 106	114?	3.3.732- 20.2.733	Payni 6, ind. 3 ἀρχὴ Diocletian era year 451	31.5.734	See the remarks in SPP XIX p. 31-32; P.Ross. Georg. III p. 227 n. 1; CSBE 57 n. 13; KRU index VI, p. 463 (year 117 would be 31.1.735-20.1.736). Cf. also BL V 97 ad SB 5609.
29	KRU 70	132	20.8.749- 8.8.750	Epeiph 10, ind. 3, Diocletian era year 466	4.7.750 ?	Hegira year and Diocletian era year seem to agree, indictional date = 4.7.749.
30	SB I 5606 = KRU 99	164	6.9.780- 25.8.781	Phaophi 18, ind. 4	15.10.780	Cf. SPP XIX p. 32 n. 4.
31	SB I 5602 = KRU 91	164	6.9.780- 25.8.781	Pharmouthi -, ind. 4	27.3- 25.4.781	
32	BKU III 364	167, ind. 8	5.8.783- 23.7.784	lost ?		Cf. ed.'s introd. where ind. 8 should be 1.5.784- 30.4.785 (ind. 7 = 1.5.783-30.4.784); there is agree- ment between ind. 8 and Hegira year 167 for the period 1.5-23.7.784.
33	SPP VIII 1184	100+, ind. 11		Phamenoth 20, ind. 14 (ed. 11)	16.3.761?	See the remarks in «BSAC» 26 (1984) 102; ind. 14 could be 760/61, Phamenoth 20 = 16.3 Wessely read the numeral of the indiction in line 4 as ια, but this cannot be correct in view of the numeral for the indiction (lunar count) read in line 2 already as ια, cf. «TAPA» 69 (1938) 275-79. A date to 16.3.761 would correspond with a fiscal Hegira year 140 (solar count). Restore in line 2 the numeral as ρ[μ]?

The documents listed above can be classified in various ways, specifically according to their origin and according to the function of the Hegira year in the individual texts.

Origin:

Non-Egyptian texts: N^os 2-7, 9 (all from Palestine);

Egyptian texts: all other (Herakleopolites: N^os 1, 8, 24-25, 32-33; Hermopolites: no. 10; Antaiopolites: N^os 12-23; Thebes: N^os 28-31; exact provenance unknown: N^os 11 [Babylon/Antaiopolites]), 26, 27 [Upper-Egypt]).

Function:

As far as the documents listed above contain (parts of) an Arabic text, the Hegira year is used in this part in order to give an absolute date to the document in question (cf. N^os 1-16, 24). It is much rarer to find a Hegira year in a similar function in the Greek part of a bilingual text or in a text of which only the Greek part survives (cf. No. 15, PERF 593, and N^os 28-31 for bilingual documents; No. 27 has only survived in Greek). In all other instances (N^os 17-23, 25-26, 31-33) the Hegira year is referred to in a "fiscal" context, i.e. reference is made to a period of time for which e.g. a tax-payment was due or during which it had been made, or to which a certain obligation (e.g. the performance of a service) was related. These fiscal Hegira years (referred to simply as ἔτους... , or as κατ' Ἀραβας ἔτους... ; the expression ἔτους Σαρακηνῶν is found only in the Greek datings above Coptic documents from Thebes, N^os 28-31, and may perhaps be regarded as a regionalism) were calculated sometimes on the basis of lunar years (N^os 2-7, 9, 17-23, 32; possibly N^o 25?), sometimes on the basis of an artificial counting of solar Hegira years (year 1 = 7.621-7.622; cf. N^os 15, 33 (?); possibly also N^o 25?). For the details see the discussion in "TAPA" 69 (1938) 274ff.

Conclusion:

The use of Hegira years in Greek, Greek/Arabic and Greek/Coptic documents from the period A.D. 641- ca. 780 seems restricted primarily to fiscal documents. It is rare to find Hegira years as a means of giving an absolute date to texts which are not primarily dealing with matters of taxation, and so far no Greek document has turned up with such

a date (N^os 28-31 are Coptic documents provided with Greek datings in the heading; the only 2 Greek texts in which one finds a year of the Hegira as a means of giving an absolute date to the document in question, viz. in N^o 15, PERF 593 (bilingual Arab/Greek) and in N^o 27, deal —again— with matters of taxation). Apparently, the use of the Hegira year as a means of giving an absolute date to all kinds of non-fiscal documents written by the Greek-speaking inhabitants of Egypt was not popular. One preferred to use the Diocl. era year, or not to give any absolute date at all. It remains, therefore, doubtful, whether future publications of papyri dating from post-641 will ever produce e.g. a sale of a house written entirely in Greek and dated with the help of a Hegira year.

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